

Message Text

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PAGE 01 HELSIN 00600 280706Z

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EINV, EPAP, FI, SZ

SUBJECT: U.S. GOVERNMENT ACTIONS RE XYLITOL

REF: HELSINKI A-27

1. XYROFINN, A JOINT VENTURE OF SUOMEN SOKERI OY (FINNISH SUGAR COMPANY) AND SWISS FIRM HOFFMAN-LAROCHE, IS MOVING AHEAD WITH PLANS TO MARKET IN U.S. A BIRCHWOOD-BASED SWEETENER "XYLITOL." DETAILED CLINICAL, RADIOGRAPHIC, BIOCHEMICAL AND MICROBIOLOGICAL TESTING AT UNIVERSITY OF TURKU INDICATES THAT XYLITOL IS NON- AND ANTICARIOGENIC, I.E. IT NOT ONLY DOES NOT CAUSE CAVITIES BUT ALSO REDUCES FORMATION OF CAVITIES.

2. ON MARCH 19 I VISITED XYROFINN'S FACTORY AT KOTKA, WHERE GENERAL MANAGER FORSBERG TOLD ME 3,000 TONS OF 8,000 TONS ANNUAL PRODUCTION IS EXPORTED TO U.S. HE CONFIRMED REPORT REFAIR THAT XYROFINN PLANS INCLUDE POSSIBILITY OF BUILDING FACTORY IN U.S. XYROFINN DOES NOT INTEND TO PRODUCE FINAL PRODUCTS SUCH AS GUM AND CANDY, BUT RATHER TO LICENSE USE OF XYLITOL IN PRODUCTS TO BE DEVELOPED AND MARKETED BY OTHER FIRMS. NEGOTIATIONS WITH WRIGLEY ARE UNDER WAY.

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3. PLANS FOR MARKETING IN U.S. DEPEND ON VERIFICATION OF XYLITOL'S NON- AND ANTICARIOGENIC PROPERTIES. FORSBERG INDICATED STUDY UNDER WAY UNDER AUSPICES OF AMERICAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION AND THAT THEREAFTER FDA RULING WOULD BE SOUGHT.

4. THIS PRODUCT, WHICH HAS RECEIVED WIDESPREAD PUBLICITY HERE, WOULD IF CLAIMS VERIFIED BE AN ENORMOUS ADVANCE IN DENTAL CARE. WHAT CONCERNS ME IS THE RISK OF DELAY IN HANDLING XYLITOL IN U.S. AMID THE COMPLEXITIES OF U.S. REGULATION OF SUGAR IMPORTS, BANS ON OTHER SWEETENERS, AND INVESTIGATIONS BY ADA, FDA, AND, WE WOULD THINK, POSSIBLY FTC AS WELL, MARKETING OF XYLITOL COULD BE DELAYED CONSIDERABLY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE REASONS RATHER THAN FOR LACK OF CLAIMED PROPERTIES. SUCH CONSIDERABLE PUBLIC ATTENTION HAS BEEN DIRECTED TO USG ROLE WITH REGARD TO UNSUCCESSFUL FINNISH EFFORTS TO SELL ICEBREAKERS, AND ACTUAL OR POTENTIAL RESTRICTIONS EXIST ON IMPORTS OF FINNISH CHEESE, SPECIALTY STEEL, AND HOCKEY STICKS, DELAYS IN USG HANDLING OF XYLITOL WOULD REINFORCE PUBLIC UNCERTAINTIES ABOUT USG POSTURE IN ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH FINLAND.

5. I THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT DEPARTMENT LOOK INTO HANDLING OF XYLITOL TO OBTAIN CLEARER VIEW THAN OFFICIALS HERE CAN PROVIDE OF ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS WITHIN USG NECESSARY TO PERMIT SUCCESSFUL MARKETING OF XYLITOL IN U.S., AND ENCOURAGE ACTIONS IN TIMELY MANNER WITHIN USG.

6. COPY OF UNIVERSITY OF TURKU FINDINGS AND OTHER PAPERS RELATING TO XYLITOL BEING POUCHED ACHILLES EUR/NE. AUSTAD

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